

**Speech by Minister Mr. Tsukasa UEMURA,
Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Japan to the Arab Republic of Egypt**

Seminar on Landmines Detection: Innovations and Demands for New Technology
Under the auspice of Japan-Egypt Science and Technology Year 2008
14th June 2008, Helwan, A.R.E.

Prof. Salah Mahmoud, President of the National Research Institute of Astronomy & Geophysics

Prof. Ayman Al Dessouki, President of the National Authority for Remote Sensing & Space Sciences.

Mr. Yuji OISHI, Director of Japan Society for the Promotion of Science.

Dr. Ahmed Khairy, 1st Undersecretary for Cultural Affairs & Missions, Ministry of Higher Education & the General Coordinator of Japan Egypt Science & Technology Year.

Prof. Meslehi Ragab, rapporteur of the committee of Japan Egypt Science & Technology Year.

H.E. Ambassador Salah El Sadek, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for Diplomatic, Consular Corps & Inspection Affairs.

Brigadier Ahmed Gomaa, Head of Engineering Department, Ministry of Defense

Mr. Nagati Farghali, Advisor to the Governor of Matrouh

Dr. Botrous Boutros Ghali (To confirm his attendance)

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Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great honor and pleasure to be among you today at that conference which addresses a topic of high importance, that is, the Landmines Detection technology. I would like to seize this opportunity to thank all those who helped in organizing the conference and those who came here today to put a valuable input to this seminar on Landmine Detection.

Last year, the year 2007 witnessed new and significant developments in Japan-Egypt relationship. Then Prime Minister Shinzo Abe made an official visit to Egypt in early May and declared the opening of a new era for the Japan and Middle East relations, in particular its relationship with Egypt. In this new era, the key word is 'multi-layered' relationships between Japan and the Middle East encompassing broad areas such as politics, economy, culture and environment. Science and technology

should, of course, be one of the important pillars in our multi-layered relations, and this year 2008 is designated as the Japan-Egypt Year of Science and Technology.

Starting with successful opening ceremonies held in Cairo and also in Tokyo, we have had a series of seminars, workshops and conferences so far and going to have more throughout this year. Of course, this meaningful seminar conference is one of the series of the events within the framework of Japan-Egypt Science and Technology Year

Ladies and gentlemen,

Needless to say, we all commit ourselves to peace. Safety and well-being of the people under the peaceful circumstance are one of our common ultimate goals. The issue of anti-personnel mines, in particular, is closely related to the welfare of the people living in the post-conflict area. Japan has been more active than before in tackling the issue since 1997 when the concept of “Zero Victim Program” was announced. Since then, our principles have been continuously focused upon two main aspects: 1) universal and effective prohibition of anti-personnel mines; and 2) strengthening assistance for mine clearance and victim assistance. And, for the sake of the latter, (namely, assistance for mine clearance and victim assistance), we believe that the cooperation among governments, private sectors, researchers of academia, and civil societies is indispensable.

In this context, we highly appreciate the convening of this seminar, because, with the participation of many prominent researchers and scholars, the seminar will cast light on the innovations of landmines detection method and technology. Without being able to detect landmines effectively and safely, no one can expect clear them all.

I recall myself well having visited mine fields in various countries. Southern Lebanon, Kurdish valleys in Iraq, Kabul vicinities of Afghanistan, Quneitra of Golan Heights.... I have noticed that geographical and meteorological environments differ from one site to another. I remember that an old farmer of one of the villages in the Southern Lebanon once told me “Mines frequently move at every rainfall and I do not know exactly where to cultivate safely and where not to.” Thus, as we all are aware well, landmines are major obstacles against the development of the communities at post-conflict era.

I understand that prominent experts and well-experienced researchers from Egypt and Japan gather together at this venue today. Because I do not have any ample academic background on this matter, I should abide by humble attitude and refrain from pretending

to know everything. However, I can only assure you that participants from Japan are all brilliant figures in this field, who are well known not only in Japan but also all over the world. They have developed most recent and unique technologies and methods to detect landmines in an effective and swift manner, with the firm conviction of responsibility and commitment to the next generation. That is what I am proud of, and the government of Japan is proud of. I sincerely hope that all participants will have candid and fruitful exchange of views and information in this field of Landmine Detection technology for our better future, and that we will be able to declare meaningful conclusion at the end of this seminar tomorrow.

Thank you.